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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, MERCED POLICE CHIEF, MERCED COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY, AND STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF A 21-MONTH-LONG CRACKDOWN ON MERCED GANGSTER CRIPS ORGANIZATION FOLLOWING MURDER OF MERCED DETECTIVE

EIGHT SENTENCED TO LENGTHY SENTENCES IN FEDERAL PENITENTIARY FOR DRUG AND GUN OFFENSES, INCLUDING 16 YEARS 8 MONTHS FOR GANG LEADER

MERCED--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, City of Merced Police Chief Jeff Schindler, Merced County District Attorney Gordon Spencer, and Director of Law Enforcement, California Department of Justice Rick Oules, federal law enforcement officials announced today the results of a 21-month-long crackdown on the Merced Gangster Crips crack cocaine distribution organization. The multi-agency effort followed on the heels of the tragic murder of Merced Police Detective Stephan Gray on April 15, 2004 by a member of the Merced Gangster Crips organization. During the two-week manhunt to locate accused murderer Cuitlatuac "Tao" Rivera, all levels of law enforcement learned significant amounts of information about the extent of criminal activity perpetrated by the Merced Gangster Crips. Ultimately, in addition to numerous prosecutions by the Merced County District Attorney's Office in state court, eight members of the gang, including gang leader RAYMOND SLATON, were convicted in federal court and sentenced to lengthy terms of incarceration in the federal penitentiary.

The following list of defendants belonging to the Merced Gangster Crips have been sentenced in federal court: gang offenders prosecuted federally were:

<u>Name and Age</u>	<u>Sentence & Date</u>	<u>Conviction</u>
SIDNEY ALLEN, 38	2 yrs 1/9/06	Felon in Possession of a Firearm
RAYMOND SLATON, 34	16 yrs 8 mos 11/22/05	Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine Base
GUSTAVO REYES, 23	6 yrs 6 mos 4/1/05	Possession w/Intent to Distribute Cocaine Base & Marijuana - 2 counts each
DOMINIC BELL, 31	8 yrs 4 mos	Distribution of Cocaine Base

	8/23/05	& Possession with Intent to Cocaine Base
TYRONE JOHNSTON, 31	2 yrs 6 mos 10/11/05	Felon in Possession of Firearm
RAFAEL AGUIRRE, 30	5 yrs 3 mos 10/24/05	Distribution of Cocaine Base & Distribution of Cocaine
JENSEN SCOTT, 23	10 yrs 9/26/05	Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine Base
PERISHA WOOLRIDGE, 26	2 yrs 7 mos 11/14/05	Possession of Cocaine w/Intent to Manufacture & Distribute Cocaine Base & Possession of Cocaine Base W/Intent to Distribute Cocaine Base

"Gang violence is a cancer in California's Central Valley. Random and brutal acts of violence committed by gang offenders undermine the very fabric of some of our poorest communities. All of us in law enforcement must do everything in our power to aggressively address the scourge of gang violence," said United States Attorney Scott.

"This has been an excellent example of dedicated law enforcement team work from the federal, state and local level to rid our community of gang violence and gang presence", stated Chief Schindler.

Stated Merced District Attorney Spencer, "Often federal law provides the most suitable punishment for gang members. We are very fortunate to have a United States Attorney's Office as our partner in the effort to control gang violence and influence in our community."

"The Merced Gangster Crip investigation has displayed the very best in law enforcement cooperation and coordination. Although we are very pleased with the outcome of this particular investigation, we acknowledge that there is a great deal of work left to be done in the gang enforcement arena. We are determined to continue the fight with our local, state, and federal partners, and are determined to aggressively pursue those who would threaten the safety of our communities," said Director Oules.

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